

**SCATTERED LEAVES  
FROM A  
PHYSICIAN'S DIARY**

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Scattered Leaves from a Physician's Diary by Albert Abrams

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**ALBERT ABRAMS**

**SCATTERED LEAVES  
FROM A  
PHYSICIAN'S DIARY**



To his learned and es-  
teemed friend The Reverend  
Dr J. J. Forsaeger: with com-  
pliments of  
The Author.

SCATTERED LEAVES FROM A PHYSICIAN'S  
DIARY.

By

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CALIFORNIA

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1900.



ALBERT ABRAMS, M. D.

TO MY WIFE,  
IN WHOSE COMPANY, DURING A TOUR OF THE  
WORLD, THESE STORIES WERE WRITTEN, THIS  
VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR.



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LEAF I.

"MY FIRST PATIENT."

**L**EARNING how to wait is the initiatory experience in the career of every physician. During my apprenticeship to patience as a novice in medicine, time passed slowly, and I applied myself assiduously to the study of complicated diseases, which will occur perhaps once, if at all, in the professional life of a busy physician.

The ordinary diseases, like dyspepsia, bronchitis, colic, and even toothache, were dismissed without even a moiety of attention. Much to my sorrow, I soon learned that only the rich and influential physician could afford to diagnose an obscure disease and call it by its technical term.

If an unknown physician diagnoses a case of toothache, he tells the sufferer it is toothache, but the opulent consultant is privileged to call it odontalgia, and regulates his honorarium accordingly.

Soon I got to be very busy practicing economy, and I purchased a book, entitled "How to Live on Five Dollars a Week." I found the book eminently practical, and could have followed its precepts very comfortably if I only had the five dollars.

One day when the gastric vacuum was becoming pronounced, and when the coloration of my feelings was assuming a cerulean aspect, Mrs. Dennis Mulcahy, one of my neighbors, entered the waiting-room of my office. I saw Mrs. Mulcahy through the key-hole. I was so perturbed that I hardly knew what to do. This was evidently to be my first patient. I didn't want to lose her, nor did I deem it proper to admit her at once into my consultation-room.

I coughed loudly to assure her that I was in, and then I walked stealthily around to the door of the waiting-room, locking it from the outside to be sure that Mrs. Mulcahy would not escape. Then I hurriedly rearranged my room. Taking from the book-case some ponderous volumes, I distributed them carelessly about my writing desk. I gathered up all the cigar stumps, and I gave special prominence to a skull which had done duty for over twenty years in contributing food to a friend of mine, who had died a confirmed gourmand. Then I coughed again, and then as if talking loudly to a supposititious patient, I said, grandiloquently, "My dear sir, I appreciate your check of one thousand dollars, which you have given me for saving the life of your child, and if you need my services again, why

call on me. "Don't thank me again, my dear sir, this check is genuine sincerely, ~~at~~ good-day to you."

Having delivered myself of these words, with my last fifty cents in my pocket, I peeped through the key-hole to note the effect of my language on Mrs. Mulcahy.

She was pacing the room nervously, in evident distress. She must be suffering from some nervous trouble. I looked through an index of symptoms very hurriedly, and found that nervous walking indicate some nervous disease. I opened the door and admitted Mrs. Mulcahy.

"Sit down, Mrs. Mulcahy, and excuse me for keeping you waiting, the fact is I was very busy. You are suffering from a nervous affection, Mrs. Mulcahy. Your eyes looked distressed, and your pulse is somewhat agitated."

"Sure its not me at all that schick, dochther. Its me own darlint son Patsy."

"Poor little Patsy sick," I queried, "why what ails him?"

"Shure its fur you to find out, and if I knew, would I be coming to you at all, at all? Patsy has schwallowed something down his surcofagus, so the other dochther said, and its the viry divil its playing wid his lights ever since."

"Mrs. Mulcahy," replied I with gravity, "if another physician is in attendance, it's against the code for me to visit Patsy."

"Agin the pfwat, did you say?"

"Against the code, Mrs. Mulcahy."

"I told you it pfwat was not a cowlid, but an illumination of his lights."

I saw it was useless to discuss the code with Mrs. Mulcahy. She told me "that the former physicians were no longer in attendance, and that they had given her Patsy up," and here she wept bitterly.

I remembered Patsy very well; a dirty, freckled little rascal with red hair. Oftentimes in the bitterness of my heart, when I had cursed my fate, and when I sought solace in walking around the neighborhood, I frequently encountered Patsy.

He was a saucy imp, generous to a fault, and the pride of the neighborhood. Everybody liked Patsy, and so did I. Persuasion was no longer necessary, and I accompanied Mrs. Mulcahy to her humble home in the poverty stricken district, and after ascending four flights of stairs, I entered the sick chamber—a room without a light and a stifling atmosphere.

There in his little cot lay poor Patsy, feeble and emaciated. Patsy held forth his tiny arms, and I allowed them to encircle my neck. My eyes moistened at Patsy's almost inaudible entreaty to "do sunthin' for him."

"He wanted to play wid de kids again. He wanted to grow up a big man, and buy his mammy all de ginger cake she could eat, and all de merlasses candy she could swallow."

There was more genuine sincerity in Patsy's nature than could be found in all the boasted triumphs of philanthropy. Could little Patsy divine what passed through my mind at that time, he would have little faith in my ability to help him. Three excellent physicians had attended him and did him no good, while I, a mere amateur in medicine, was asked